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## THE BIRCH, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

WHEN Master Adolphus Smith, who has been detected in a suspicious situation in the school-orchard, is sentenced by the Rev. Kane M'Tawse of the academy, Birch Grove—who receives a limited number of young gentlemen at £40 per annum—to a gentle titillation with a certain well-known instrument of juvenile torture, that apple-munching youth is not in the least aware of the very great antiquity of the punishment which his learned instructor delights to inflict. If young Smith but knew the ancient customs of the Lacedæmonians, and how boys like him were whipped for hours before an altar, making it a point of honour not to cry, there can be no doubt that the young gentleman would bear the sentence of M'Tawse with much greater equanimity than, we regret to say, is usually his practice. We may be permitted to hope that, as his classic knowledge extends, the veil of ignorance will be withdrawn, and the examples of these Spartan youths will ultimately take effect. But there are so many of this young gentleman's seniors in a state of ignorance on the subject as to demand inquiry, and we are astonished that some of our keen-eyed dealers in *Common Things* and *Things not Generally Known*, have not long ere this 'familiarily explained' the word Birch. Even in our most ponderous encyclopædias, we have to turn to the word 'Flagellant' before we can even partially satisfy our curiosity; and these learned repositories contain but a few dry sentences about 'a sect of religious fanatics.' This utter darkness as to such a thing as birch is most extraordinary; so extraordinary, that an ancient author recommends a work on the subject, and says that a time will sooner or later arrive when the discipline and flagellations which were in use for so many centuries, will be considered by the people so whimsical and absurd as to be unworthy of belief, although these same persons will be in the daily practice of other customs equally absurd and whimsical.

The origin and early development of flagellation is involved in great obscurity, and therefore it is hardly necessary to say that we have not the means of tracing out the first whipping which was inflicted, or the name and address of him or her who administered it. The literature of the subject, too, is exceedingly scanty; but we have a shrewd guess that the population of the world would not be very numerous when the practice was instituted. We will not at present, however, venture into any inquiry as to antediluvian discipline, although in these times of book-making, we have occasionally had thoughts of doing a work, to be entitled *Birch before the Flood*, illustrated

with cuts, but will confine ourselves to the subject in its more modern aspect.

'Once upon a time' that we have read about, a tremendous dispute agitated the learned world as to whether whipping as a penance, or whipping as a punishment, was first introduced. One author contended for one view of the case, and his opponent fought to establish an opposite theory. The learning of each was flashed in the face of the other, and, as usual, the dispute ended by each thinking the other wrong. The relation of facts evolved by the controversialists, is so clouded in words and lost in old Latin quotations, or so frittered away in notes and commentaries, as to make it a task of no small difficulty to separate the corn from the chaff. We need not further allude to the controversy than merely to say, that all the probabilities of the case are in favour of punishment as first giving occasion for the use of the rod, although a strong case has been made out on behalf of those who hold a different opinion. We may remark upon the fondness of some of the ancient saints for the penance of flagellation, as detailed by those writers who take this view of the subject; one saint in particular was so fond of it, as to inflict upon himself, at one performance, a complement of 183,000 stripes! As, however, his daily allowance was 30,000 lashes, this immense number need not be much wondered at: things are only great by comparison, and this gentleman, it is hinted, wore a cuirass!

The ancient Romans carried the practice of flagellation further, perhaps, than any other nation; and we have been so fortunate as to find several authors who refer to their use of the scourge. Flagellatic emblems were common in every house; and the judges of the nation, with a desire to strike all evil-doers with terror, were surrounded with those instruments of chastisement. They had all different names: there was the *ferula*, a flat strap of leather, which was the mildest of all; then came the *scutica*, an instrument of twisted parchment, which was a degree more severe than the first named; after that there was the *flagella*, and the terrible *flagellum*, the severest of all, which was composed of plaited thongs of ox-leather. There were other instruments of punishment still more terrible than even these, such as balls of metal stuck full of small sharp points, and fastened to the end of long whips. So prevalent did the practice of whipping slaves become, that in course of time these unfortunates came to be named after the particular kind of flagellation they were made to undergo; in fact, the scourge was looked upon by the Romans as characteristic of dominion. The master or mistress of a Roman household in those days often exercised their terrible powers

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with unrelenting severity, and the poor slaves were not unfrequently scourged to death from a mere caprice. It was quite a sufficient excuse among the Roman ladies to whip a slave, if, as Juvenal expresses it, their nose displeased them; in other words, if they were not satisfied with the state of their own charms. Their wantonness of power was carried still further, if we may credit the same Juvenal. It was a customary thing with some of them, when they proposed having their hair dressed with both nicety and expedition, to have the dressing-maid stripped to the waist, ready for flagellation should she be guilty of any fault or mistake in performing her task. The fair termagants at last carried these cruelties to such a pitch, that in the beginning of the empire it was found necessary to restrain their licence. During the reign of the Emperor Adrian, a lady was banished for five years for inflicting undue cruelties on her female slaves. The smallest faults, such as breaking glasses or over-seasoning dishes, exposed these wretched serfs to grievous whippings, which were generally inflicted in presence of guests who happened to be entertained at table, as a means of affording a little diversion.

In addition to the flagellating customs of the ancient Romans, we may allude to a ceremony which was common among the Lacedæmonians, and called the Day of Flagellation, on account of the ceremony of whipping, in front of the altar of Diana, a number of boys, who freely submitted to that painful treatment. Various authors mention this fact. Plutarch says: 'Boys are whipped for a whole day, often to death, before the altar of Diana the Orthian, and they suffer it with cheerfulness, and even joy; nay, they strive with each other for victory; and he who bears up longest, and has been able to endure the greatest number of stripes, carries the day. This solemnity is called the contest of flagellations, and is celebrated every year in presence of the parents.' The reward to these martyrs of the birch was a stone; and statues similar to those which we erect to our poets and men of learning, were erected to their memory in the public places of Sparta.

The madness of the *Luperci* is scarcely worth alluding to; they were simply a disgust: and it is surprising that their festival, as it was called, should have existed for several hundred years after the introduction of Christianity. Their orgies have been recorded in the works of different authors. They were performed on occasions of particular solemnities, when the actors in them, reduced to a state of nudity, ran about striking each other with great fury. The following brief account of the sect is from the latest edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:—'The first recorded instances of self-flagellation are isolated cases which happened about the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era. From this date, the practice began to spread till the middle of the eleventh century, when, by the precepts and example of Damian, it came to be regarded by many religious persons as a sort of duty. The custom was very warmly opposed by the more liberal minds among the clergy, but it continued to spread in despite of all opposition; and soon after the middle of the thirteenth century, the devotees of the system, no longer content to mortify themselves in private, began to do so in public. Societies were now formed by which the doctrine of flagellation was promulgated throughout Europe; and the excesses into which they were frequently hurried by the ardour of their enthusiasm, excited the astonishment even of their contemporaries.'

Leaving the days of ancient Rome and the festival of the Lupercalia, we may, by a bold leap over a few troublesome centuries, arrive at a period much nearer our own day, when King Birch reigned with terrible severity over the religious public; when flagellation as a penance was a rage, and as a punishment was

rigorously observed both in the king's palace and in meaner households. As an example of the discipline of the court, we may cite Brantome's quaint account of the misfortune which befell Mademoiselle de Limeuil, a maid of honour to the queen of Henry II. of France. This lady, as that author relates, was of high birth, great beauty of person, very handsome, very witty, and an adept in the use of her pen. She had been placed at court in the capacity of a lady-in-waiting, and she had been there but a few months when she tried her wit at the expense of the ladies and gentlemen by whom she was surrounded, and wrote a pasquinade in which all were made to appear. These verses, being ingeniously written, spread very fast, and people were curious to know who had composed such a satire. At last it was found out that Mademoiselle de Limeuil was the author; and as the queen, besides being a lady of serious temper, was grown disgusted with the great licence of writing that prevailed at court, and had determined at least to prevent any satire or lampoon from originating in her own household, orders were given, in consequence of which mademoiselle was rewarded for her verses by a whipping; and those young ladies in the suite of the queen who had been privy to the composition of the pasquinade, were likewise flagellated. The author we have cited thus moralises on the event: 'The instance of flagellation just now related, from which neither the beauty, nor the birth, nor the rank of the culprits, nor the brilliancy of their wit, their readiness at their pen, nor happy turn for satire, could screen them, clearly shews how much flagellations were in esteem in the times we speak of, and how much efficacy they were thought to possess for insuring those two great advantages—good order and decorum.' Such disciplines were not, however, confined in these noble houses to ladies: wholesome corrections of a similar kind were also frequently bestowed on the male retainers—the pages coming in for a large share of attention, and even strangers visiting the place were not exempted.

There has been a great deal of controversy on the subject of flagellation in nunneries, both as to such punishments being improper, and as to the right mode of infliction. We do not propose to enter at all into this very delicate part of the subject, but shall merely repeat a statement of Du Cange, who tells us of the different ceremonies observed in convents during the administration of discipline. He says that flagellations have to be suffered in the presence of the whole congregation—that in monasteries the discipline is administered by the hands of a 'vigorous brother;' and in the nunneries, by 'an elderly morose sister.'

It may be permitted us here to abridge from Delolme's *History of the Flagellants*, the following notices of the fathers of St Lazare, in Paris, whose school was known as 'the Seminary of the Good Boys.' These reverend fathers carried on an extensive business as general flagellators, the punishments being inflicted, as previously arranged, on parties carrying a recommendatory letter to this effect. Being situated in the metropolis, it was a most convenient place of punishment. Fathers or mothers who had undutiful sons, tutors who had unruly pupils, uncles who were intrusted with the education of ungovernable nephews, masters who had wickedly inclined apprentices, whom they durst not themselves undertake to correct, applied to the fathers of St Lazare, and had their wishes gratified. So regular was the trade carried on by the good fathers in that branch of business, that letters of the above kind were literally notes of hand payable at sight. Ludicrous incidents frequently arose out of their mode of doing business. Young culprits, who suspected what was in the wind, contrived to get some other person to take charge of their letter—with what result the reader may guess. Others who had letters to carry to the house of Lazare, the contents of

which they did not mistrust, would often enough undesignedly charge other persons to deliver them; and the unfortunate bearer had no sooner presented his card of introduction, than he was straightway collared, prepared for the discipline, and rewarded for his good-nature by having administered to him a most excellent flagellation. When a lady had been slighted by her lover, she brought all her wit to bear upon his punishment, and frequently contrived to have it inflicted by the fathers at the seminary of St Lazare. An artful scheme was contrived to get the unfortunate individual, under some pretence or other, to call at the place, and the reverend disciplinarians, having been previously advised and paid, took good care to make the faithless gallant yield ample satisfaction to the injured fair one. The system of St Lazare ultimately led to such abuses as to attract the attention of the government of the period, who caused the seminary to be abolished.

We have not sufficient space to relate all the anecdotes of flagellation which have been handed down to us from the remote monastic ages, but the following is one which deserves to be recorded: A certain jovial friar, who had a keen eye to the good things of this world, found the means of procuring a number of fine dishes and a quantity of rare wine which his vows expressly forbade his class to partake of. He invited a select number of his brethren to share in the feast; and as it would have been attended with certain detection, if it had been laid out in any of their cells, they selected one of the large brewing-tuns of the monastery as a dining-room. As the feasting was held on several successive days, the abbot began to wonder at so many of the monks mysteriously disappearing at a certain hour. Being unable to find them either in their cells or in the chapel, he went himself on a voyage of discovery, and descending to the vaults, the savoury perfume of the dishes at once betrayed the secret dining of the jolly friars. The abbot slyly took his measures, and at once made his entrance into the hidden apartment. As may be supposed, the brethren were prodigiously alarmed; but the abbot soon set them all at their ease, expostulated with them for making the feast a secret, begged leave to join their revelry, partook of the wine and the well-seasoned dishes, and spent the greater part of the afternoon in a most agreeable and convivial manner. At last the banquet terminated, and the monks dispersed, not without serious misgiving that something would come out of all this; and they were right. 'Next day,' says Delolme, 'a chapter having been summoned, the abbot desired the prior to fill his place, then standing forth, he accused himself of the sin he had committed the day before, and requested to be well flogged for it. The prior objected much to such a discipline being inflicted on the abbot, but the latter having insisted, his request was complied with. This proceeding greatly astonished his boon-companions, but there was no escape. They were compelled to follow the example of the abbot, and that astute individual had so arranged matters, as to insure each of the delinquents a sound flogging.'

There are many interesting anecdotes connected with the birch. In the French *Causés Célèbres*, we find the reports of various trials—arising out of the practice of flagellation—one in particular, where a noble lady waylaid another high personage of the same sex, and had her whipped by her servants. In London, about three hundred years ago, a clergyman was tried for administering to his housemaid 'a discipline after the manner of a school-boy,' and he even defended his conduct in a quarto pamphlet. The old practice of birching all the children of a family every time an execution took place, may be also referred to. This was a common practice some centuries ago, and its object was to keep the sufferers in mind of what had occurred. The still more recent plan of flogging the

pauper children at the boundaries of the parish, in order that they might recollect them if disputes arose, seems a remnant of the same custom. One anecdote of 'penance' which we have heard is as follows: A lady, after having been to confession, was ordered to mortify her flesh, and to get some person to inflict upon her a hundred blows. The priest, however, forgot to say with what kind of instrument; and the lady, taking advantage of his oversight, caused her servant to flagellate her with a bunch of ostrich feathers. We may bid farewell to the ancient part of our subject by referring to the case of Clopinel, a court poet, who wrote a malicious libel on some of the ladies of the court. These beautiful maids determined to be revenged on the poet, and at a consultation which was held, it was unanimously determined that he should be flagellated. At a convenient time, he was seized and prepared for the rod, which the fair ones had determined to administer in person. He was saved, however, from the infliction by his presence of mind; 'piteously addressing the angry yet beautiful group around him, he humbly entreated that the first blow might be struck by the honourable damsel who felt herself the most aggrieved; and it is needless to add that not a lash was inflicted.'

A recent correspondence in the *Times* newspaper gives us the information that birch is not yet extinct in Great Britain, and that, having been banished from court, and almost fallen into disuse in our criminal code, it has found refuge in our great public schools, making Eton its head-quarters. We need not travel so far as Russia to laugh at flagellation in the nineteenth century, since we can have it at home. As the modern case has been made public through the columns of the London daily press, we need have no delicacy in alluding to it here. A gentleman, who had placed his two sons at Eton, heard that the eldest one had been flogged, and as this young man was eighteen years of age, the father thought the punishment very improper, and wrote to his boy instructions not again to submit to such a punishment. 'I consider such a humiliation as disgraceful both to the party receiving and inflicting it; therefore be on your guard how you expose yourself to so degrading an exhibition as that of your person on the whipping-block. It is fitting for the felon, but does not become a gentleman. Therefore, once more be on your guard, and should your love of fun or insubordination place you again in such a position, I desire that you will leave Eton, and not permit any one so to insult you and common decency as long as you can defend yourself. I am aware that Eton customs do not attach such disgrace to flogging as elsewhere, and it is one of the greatest objections to this practice that it actually deprives itself of its effect by its frequent repetition. Up to a certain age, flogging may be tolerated; but when the child approaches the period of manhood, such a mode of punishment is revolting to every mind which is capable of being actuated by manly and correct feelings. I wish you to shew this letter to your tutor, in order that he may be made acquainted with my views on this point, and, if he should think proper, communicate them to Dr Goodford.' Accordingly, about three months ago, the young gentleman having been found 'smelling of smoke,' and not choosing to tell an untruth, he did not deny that he had been smoking, and for this he was again sentenced to receive the rod, but in obedience to his father's instructions, he left Eton. This is modern birch—young men of eighteen, nineteen, and even twenty years of age, flogged *supra dorsum nudum* by the head-master of the school, who, from his position, must be a man of great learning and eminence, moving, of course, in the best society, and yet reduced by this tyrant custom to the level of a drummer in the army. We leave it to Mr Thackeray to class this modern



absurdity along with that other one which he so well describes in his 'Four Georges'—the lace-bedizened courtier walking backward, like a crab, before a certain great lady at the opening of the Crystal Palace.

## THE WAR-TRAIL:

### A ROMANCE.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.—THE PHANTOM HORSE.

I HAVE encountered dangers—not a few—but they were the ordinary perils of flood and field, and I understood them. I have had one limb broken, and its fellow bored with an ounce of lead. I have swum from a sinking ship, and have fallen upon the battle-field. I have looked at the muzzles of a hundred muskets aimed at my person, at less than thirty yards' distance, and felt the certainty of death; though the volley was fired, and I still live. Well, you will no doubt acknowledge these to be perils. Do not mistake me; I am not boasting of having encountered them; I met them with more or less courage—some of them with fear; but if the fears inspired by all were combined into one emotion of terror, it would not equal in intensity that which I experienced at the moment I pulled up my horse upon the prairie.

I have never been given to superstition; perhaps my religion is not strong enough for that; but at that moment I could not help yielding to a full belief in the supernatural. There was no *natural* cause—I could think of none—that would account for the mysterious disappearance of the horse. I had often sneered at the credulous sailor and his phantom ship; had I lived to look upon a phenomenon equally strange yet true—a phantom horse?

The hunters and trappers had indeed invested the white steed with this character; their stories recurred to my memory at the moment. I had used to smile at the simple credulity of the narrators. I was now prepared to believe them. They were true!

Or was I dreaming? Was it not all a dream? The search for the white steed—the surround—the chase—the long, long gallop?

For some moments I actually fancied that such *might* be the case; but soon my consciousness became clear again: I was in the saddle, and my panting, smoking steed was under me. That was real and positive. I remembered all the incidents of the chase. They, too, were real of a certainty; the white steed had been there: he was gone. The trappers spoke the truth. The horse was a phantom!

Oppressed with this thought, which had almost become a conviction, I sat in my saddle, bent and silent, my eyes turned upon the earth, but their gaze fixed on vacancy. The lazo had dropped from my fingers, and the bridle reins trailed untouched over the withers of my horse.

My belief in the supernatural was of short duration; how long I know not, for during its continuance I remained in a state of bewilderment. My senses at length returned. My eyes had fallen upon a fresh hoof-print on the turf, directly in front of me. I knew it was that made by the white steed, and this awoke me to a process of reasoning. Had the horse been a phantom, he would not have made a track? I had

never heard of the track of a ghost; though a *horse-ghost* might be different from the common kind!

My reflections on this head ended in the determination to follow the trail as far as it led; of course to the point where the steed must have mounted into the air, or evaporated—the scene of his apotheosis.

With this resolve, I gathered my reins, and rode forward upon the trail, keeping my eyes fixed upon the hoof-prints. The line was direct, and I had ridden nearly two hundred yards, when my horse came to a sudden stop. I looked out forward to discover the cause of his halting; with that glance, vanished my new-born superstitions.

At the distance of some thirty paces, a dark line was seen upon the prairie, running transversely to the course I was following. It appeared to be a narrow crack in the plain; but on spurring nearer, it proved to be a fissure of considerable width—one of those formations known throughout Spanish America as *barrancas*. The earth yawned, as though rent by an earthquake; but water had evidently something to do with its formation. It was of nearly equal width at top and bottom, and its bed was covered with a débris of rocks rounded by attrition. Its sides were perfectly vertical, and the stratification, even to the surface-turf, exactly corresponded—thus rendering it invisible at the distance of but a few paces from its brink. It appeared to shallow to the right, and no doubt ended not far off in that direction. Towards the left, on the contrary, I could see that it became deeper and wider. At the point where I had reached it, its bottom was nearly twenty feet from the surface of the prairie.

Of course, the disappearance of the white steed was no longer a mystery. He had made a fearful leap—nearly twenty feet sheer! There was the torn turf on the brink of the chasm, and the displacement of the loose stones, where he had bounded into its bed. He had gone to the left—down the barranca. The abrasion of his hoofs was visible upon the rocks.

I looked down the defile: he was not to be seen. The barranca turned off at an angle at no great distance. He had already passed round the angle, and was out of sight. It was clear that he had escaped; that to follow would be of no use; and with this reflection I abandoned all thoughts of carrying the chase further.

After giving way to a pang or two of disappointment, I began to think of the position in which I had placed myself. It is true I was now relieved from the feeling of awe that, but a moment before, had oppressed me; but my situation was far from being a pleasant one. I was at least thirty miles from the rancheria, and I could not tell in what direction it lay. The sun was setting, and therefore I had the points of the compass; but I had not the slightest idea whether we had ridden eastward or westward after leaving the settlements. I might ride back on my own trail; *perhaps* I might: it was a doubtful point. Neither through the timber, nor on the open prairie, had the chase gone in a direct line. Moreover, I noticed in many places, as we glided swiftly along, that the turf was cut up by numerous hoof-tracks: droves of mustangs had passed over the ground. It would be no easy matter for me to retrace the windings of that long gallop.

One thing was evident: it would be useless for me to make the attempt before morning. There was not half an hour of sun left, and at night the trail could not be

followed. I had no alternative but to remain where I was until another day broke.

But how remain? I was hungry; still worse, I was choking with thirst. Not a drop of water was near; I had seen none for twenty miles. The long, hot ride had made me thirst to an unusual degree, and my poor horse was in a similar condition. The knowledge that no water was near, added, as it always does, to the agony, and rendered the physical want more difficult to be endured.

I scanned the bottom of the barranca, and tracked it with my eye as far as I could see: it was waterless as the plain itself. The rocks rested upon dry sand and gravel; not a drop of the wished-for element appeared within its bed, although it was evident that at some time a torrent must have swept along its channel.

After some reflection, it occurred to me that by following the barranca downward, I might find water; at least, this was the most likely direction in which to search for it. I rode forward, therefore, directing my horse along the edge of the chasm. The fissure deepened as I advanced, until, at the distance of a mile from where I first struck it, the gulf yawned full fifty feet into the plain, the sides still preserving their vertical steepness!

The sun had now gone down; the twilight promised to be a short one. I dared not traverse that plain in the darkness; I might ride over the precipitous edge of the barranca. Besides, it was not the only one: I saw there were others—smaller ones—the beds of tributary streams in times of rain. These branched off diagonally or at right angles, and were more or less deep and steep.

Night was fast closing over the prairie; I dared not ride further amid these perilous abysses. I must soon come to a halt, without finding water. I should have to spend the long hours without relief. The thought of such a night was fearful.

I was still riding slowly onward, mechanically conducting my horse, when a bright object fell under my eyes, causing me to start in my saddle with an exclamation of joy. It was the gleam of water. I saw it in a westerly direction, the direction in which I was going. It was a small lake, or—in the phraseology of the country—a pond. It was not in the bottom of the ravine, where I had hitherto been looking for water, but up on the high prairie. There was no timber around it, no sedge; its shores were without vegetation of any kind, and its surface appeared to correspond with the level of the plain itself.

I rode forward with joyful anticipations, yet not without some anxiety. Was it a *mirage*? It might be—often had I been deceived by such appearances. But no: it had not the filmy, gauze-like halo that hangs over the mirage. Its outlines were sharply defined by the prairie turf, and the last lingering rays of the sun glistened upon its surface. It was water!

Fully assured of this, I rode forward at a more rapid rate.

I had got within about two hundred paces of the spot, keeping my eyes fixed upon the glistening water, when all at once my horse started, and drew back! I looked ahead to discover the cause. The twilight had nearly passed, but in the obscurity I could still distinguish the surface of the prairie. The barranca again frowned before me, running transversely across my path. To my chagrin, I perceived that the chasm had made a sudden turn, and that the pond was on its opposite side!

## CHAPTER XIX.

## A PRAIRIE DREAM.

There was no hope of crossing in the darkness. The barranca was here deeper than at any point above; so deep that I could but indistinctly see the rocky boulders at its bottom. Perhaps with the daylight I might be able to find a crossing-place; but from that doubtful hypothesis I derived little consolation.

It had now grown quite dark, and I had no choice but to pass the night where I was, though I anticipated a night of torture.

I dropped to the ground, and having led my horse a few rods into the prairie, so as to keep him clear of the precipice, I relieved him of his saddle and bridle, and left him to browse to the full length of the lazo. For myself, I had but few preparations to make: there was no supper to be cooked, but eating was a matter of secondary importance on that occasion. I should have preferred a cup of water to a roast turkey.

I had but few implements to dispose of in my temporary camp. My rifle and hunting-knife, with horn and pouch, and the double-headed gourd, which served as water-canteen, and which, alas! had been emptied at an early hour of the day. Fortunately, my Mexican blanket was buckled on the croupe. This I unstrapped, and having enveloped myself in its ample folds, and placed my head in the hollow of my saddle, I composed myself as well as I could, in the hope of falling asleep.

For a long time this luxury was denied me. The torture of thirst will rob one of sleep as effectually as the stinging pain of toothache. I turned and turned again, glaring at the moon; she was visible only at intervals, as black clouds were coursing across the canopy; but when she shone out, her light caused the little lake to glisten like a sheet of silver. Oh! how that bright water mocked me with its wavy ripple! I could comprehend the sufferings of Tantalus. I thought at the time that the gods could not have devised a more exquisite torture for the royal Lydian.

After some time, the pain of thirst was less intensely felt. Perhaps the cold damp air of night had the effect of relieving it; but it is more likely that fatigue and long endurance had rendered the sense less acute. Whatever may have been the cause, I suffered less, and felt myself yielding to sleep. There was no sound to keep me awake: perfect stillness reigned around; even the usual howling bark of the prairie-wolf did not reach my ear. The place seemed too lonely for this almost ubiquitous night-prowler. The only sign of life that told me I was not alone was the occasional stroke of my steed's hoof upon the hard turf, and the 'crop-crop' that told me he was busy with the short buffalo-grass. But these were soothing sounds, as they admonished me that my faithful companion was enjoying himself after his hard gallop, and strengthened my desire for repose.

I slept, but not lightly. No; my sleep was heavy and full of troubled dreams. I have a sort of half belief that the *rôle* we play in these dream-scenes wears the body as much as if we enacted it in reality. I have often awaked from such visions feeble from fatigue. If such be the fact, during that night upon the prairie I went through the toils of the preceding day with considerable additions. First of all, I was in the presence of a lovely woman: she was dark-eyed, dark-haired—a brunette—a beauty. I traced the features of Isolina. I gazed in her eyes; I was happy in her smiles; I fancied I was beloved. Bright objects were around me. The whole scene was rose-colour.

This was a short episode: it was interrupted. I heard shouts and savage yells. I looked out: the house was surrounded by Indians! They were already within

the enclosure; and the moment after, crowds of them entered the house. There was much struggling and confusion. I battled with such arms as I could lay hold of; several fell before me; but one—a tall savage, the chief, as I thought—threw his arms around my mistress, and carried her away out of my sight.

I remember not how I got mounted; but I was upon horseback, and galloping over the wide prairie in pursuit of the ravisher. I could see the savage ahead upon a snow-white steed, with Isolina in his arms. I urged my horse with voice and spur, but, as I thought, for long, long hours in vain. The white steed still kept far in the advance; and I could come no nearer him. I thought the savage had changed his form. He was no longer an Indian chief, but the fiend himself: I saw the horns upon his head; his feet were cloven hoofs! I thought he was luring me to the brink of some fell precipice, and I had no longer the power to stay my horse. Ha! The demon and his phantom horse have gone over the cliff! They have carried her along with them! I must follow—I cannot remain behind. I am on the brink. My steed springs over the chasm. I am falling—falling—falling!—

I reach the rocks at length. I am not killed: how strange I am not crushed! But no; I still live. Yet I suffer. Thirst chokes and tortures me: my heart and brain are aching, and my tongue is on fire. The sound of water is in my ears: a torrent rushes by, near me. If I could only reach it, I might drink and live: but I cannot move; I am chained to the rocks. I grasp one after another, and endeavour to drag myself along: I partially succeed; but oh, what efforts I make. The labour exhausts my strength. I renew my exertions. I am gaining ground: rock after rock is passed. I have neared the rushing water; I feel its cold spray sprinkling me. I am saved!

After such fashion ran my dream. It was the shadow of a reality, somewhat disorganised; but the most pleasant reality was that which awoke me. I found myself in the process of being sprinkled, not by the spray of a torrent, but by a plashing shower from the clouds! Under other circumstances, this might have been less welcome, but now I hailed it with a shout of joy. The thunder was rolling almost continuously; lightning blazed at short intervals; and I could hear the roar of a torrent passing down the barranca.

To assuage thirst was my first thought; and for this purpose, I stretched out my concave palms, and held my mouth wide open, thus drinking from the very fountains of the sky. Though the drops fell thick and heavy, the process was too slow, and a better plan suggested itself. I knew that my *serapé* was water-proof: it was one of the best of Parras fabric, and had cost me an hundred silver dollars. This I spread to its full extent, pressing the central parts into a hollow of the prairie. In five minutes' time, I had forgotten what thirst was, and wondered how such a thing should have caused me so much torture!

Moro drank from the same 'trough,' and betook himself to the grass again. The under side of the blanket was still dry, and the patch of ground which it had sheltered. Along this I stretched myself, drew the *serapé* over me; and after listening a while to the loud lullaby of the thunder, fell fast asleep.

## CHAPTER XX.

### LOST UPON THE PRAIRIE.

I slept sweetly and soundly. I had no dreams, or only such as were light, and forgotten with the return of consciousness.

It was late when I awoke. A bright sun was

mounting into the blue and cloudless sky. This orb was already many degrees above the horizon.

Hunger was the father of my first thought. I had eaten nothing since an early hour of the preceding day, and then only the light *desayuna* of sweet-cake and chocolate. To one not accustomed to long fasting, a single day without food will give some idea of the pain of hunger; that pain will increase upon a second day, and by the third will have reached its maximum. Upon the fourth and fifth, the body grows weaker, and the brain becomes deranged; the nerve, however, is less acute, and though the suffering is still intense, hunger is never harder to endure than upon the second or third days. Of course, these remarks apply only to those not habituated to long fasts. I have known men who could endure hunger for six days, and feel less pain than others under a fast of twenty-four hours. Indians or prairie-hunters were those men, and fortunately for them that they are endowed with such powers of endurance, often driven as they are into circumstances of the most dire necessity. Truly, 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb!'

As I have said, my first thought was of something to eat. I rose to my feet, and with my eye swept the prairie in every direction: no object, living or dead, greeted my sight; beast or bird there was none; my horse alone met my glance, quietly browsing on his trail-ropes. I could not help envying him, as I scanned his well-filled sides. I thought of the bounty of the Creator in thus providing for his less intelligent creatures—giving them the power to live where man would starve. Who does not in this recognise the hand of a Providence?

I walked forward to the edge of the barranca, and looked over. It was a grim abyss, over a hundred feet in depth, and about the same in width. Its sides were less precipitous at this point. The escarpment rocks had fallen in, and formed a sort of shelving bank, by which a man on foot might have descended into its bed, and climbed out on the opposite side; but it was not passable for a horse. Its cliffs were furrowed and uneven; rocks jutted out and hung over; and in the seams grew cactus plants, bramble, and small trees of dwarf cedar (*Juniperus prostrata*).

I looked into its channel. I had heard the torrent rolling down in the night. I saw traces of the water among the rocks. A large body must have passed, and yet not a cupful could now have been lifted from its bed! What remained was fast filtering into the sand, or rising back to the heavens upon the heated atmosphere.

I had brought with me my rifle, in hopes of espying some living creature; but, after walking for a considerable distance along the edge, I abandoned the search. No trace of bird or quadruped could be found, and I turned and went back to the place where I had slept.

To draw the picket-pin of my horse and saddle him, was the work of a few minutes; this done, I began to bethink me of *where I was going*. Back to the rancheria, of course! That was the natural reply to such a question; but there was another far less easily answered: How was I to find the way? My design of the previous night—to follow back my own trail—was no longer practicable. The rain had effaced the tracks! I remembered that I had passed over wide stretches of light dusty soil, where the hoof scarcely impressed itself. I remembered that the rain had been of that character known as 'planet showers,' with large heavy drops, that, in such places, must have blotted out every trace of the trail. To follow the 'back-track' was no longer possible. I had not before thought of this difficulty; and now, that it presented itself to my mind, it was accompanied by a new feeling of dread. I felt that *I was lost!*



As you sit in your easy-chair, you may fancy that this is a mere bagatelle—a little bewilderment that one may easily escape from who has a good horse between his thighs. It is only to strike boldly out, and by riding on in a straight line, you must in time arrive somewhere. No doubt, that is your idea; but permit me to inform you that this depends very much upon circumstances. It would indeed be trusting to blind chance. You might arrive 'somewhere,' and that somewhere might be the very point from which you had started! Do you fancy you can ride ten miles in a direct line over a prairie, without a single object to guide you? Be undeceived, then; you cannot! The best mounted men have perished under such circumstances. It may take days to escape out of a fifty-mile prairie, and days bring death. Hunger and thirst soon gain strength and agony—the sooner that you know you have not the wherewith to satisfy the one, nor quench the other. Besides, there is in your very loneliness a feeling of bewilderment, painful to an extreme degree, and from which only the oldest prairie-men are free. Your senses lose half their power, your energy is diminished, and your resolves become weak and vacillating. You feel doubtful at each step as to whether you be following the right path, and are ready at every moment to turn into another. Believe me, it is a fearful thing to be alone and lost upon the prairies!

I felt this keenly enough. I had been on the great plains before, but it was the first time I had the misfortune to wander astray on them, and I was the more terrified that I already hungered to no common degree. There was something singular, too, in the circumstances that had brought me into my present situation. The disappearance of the white steed, although accounted for by perfectly natural causes, had left upon my mind a strange impression. That he should have lured me so far, and then eluded me in such a way! I could not help fancying design in it; and fancying so, I could attribute such design only to a higher intelligence—in fact, to some supernatural cause! I was again on the edge of superstition. My mind began to give way and yield itself to hideous fancies.

I struggled against such thoughts, and succeeded in rousing myself to reflect upon some active measures for my safety. I saw that it was of no use to remain where I was. I knew that I could make a straight path for a couple of hours at least—the sun was in the sky, and that would guide me—until near the meridian hours. Then I should have to halt, and wait a while; for in that southern latitude, and just at that time of the year, the sun at noon is so near the zenith that a practised astronomer could not tell north from south. I reflected that before noon I might reach the timber, though that would not insure my safety. Even the naked plain is not more bewildering than the openings of the mezquite groves and the chapparal that border it. Among these you may travel for days without getting twenty miles from your starting-point, and they are often as destitute of the means of life as the desert itself!

Such were my reflections as I had saddled and bridled my horse, and stood scanning the plain in order to make up my mind as to the direction I should take.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

##### A PRAIRIE REFEAT.

In gazing out, my eye was attracted by some objects. They were animals, but of what species I could not tell. There are times upon the prairies when form and size present the most illusory aspects: a wolf seems as large as a horse; and a raven, sitting upon a swell of the plain, has been mistaken for a buffalo. A peculiar state of the atmosphere is the magnifying cause, and it is only the experienced eye of the trapper

that can reduce the magnified proportions and distorted form to their proper size and shape.

The objects I had noticed were full three miles off; they were in the direction of the lake, and of course on the other side of the barranca. There were several forms—five I counted—moving phantom-like against the rim of the horizon. Something drew my attention from them for a short while—a period of perhaps three or four minutes' duration. When I looked out again, they were no longer to be seen; but by the edge of the pond, at less than five hundred yards' distance, five beautiful creatures were standing, which I knew to be antelopes. They were so close to the pond, that their graceful forms were shadowed in the water, and their erect attitudes told that they had just halted after a run. Their number corresponded with the objects I had seen but the moment before far out upon the prairie. I was convinced they were the same. The distance was nothing: these creatures travel with the speed of a swallow.

The sight of the prong-horns stimulated my hunger. My first thought was how to get near them. Curiosity had brought them to the pond; they had espied my horse and myself afar off, and had galloped up to reconnoitre us. But they still appeared shy and timid, and were evidently not inclined to approach nearer.

The barranca lay between them and me, but I saw that if I could entice them to its brink, they would be within range of my rifle.

Once more staking down my horse, I tried every plan I could think of. I laid myself along the grass upon my back, and kicked my heels in the air, but to no purpose: the game would not move from the water's edge.

Remembering that my serapé was of very brilliant colours, I bethought me of another plan which, when adroitly practised, rarely fails of success. Taking the blanket, I lashed one edge to the ramrod of my rifle, having first passed the latter through the upper swivel of the piece. With the thumb of my left hand I was thus enabled to hold the rammer steady and transverse to the barrel. I now dropped upon my knees, holding the gun shoulder-high, and the gay-coloured serapé spread out almost to its full extent, hung to the ground, and formed a complete cover for my person. Before making these arrangements, I had crept to the very edge of the barranca, in order to be as near as possible should the antelopes approach upon the opposite side. Of course every manoeuvre was executed with all the silence and caution I could observe. I was in no reckless humour to frighten off the game. Hunger was my monitor. I knew that not my breakfast alone, but my life, might be depending on the successful issue of the experiment.

It was not long before I had the gratification of perceiving that my decoy was likely to prove attractive. The prong-horned antelope, like most animals of its kind, has one strongly developed propensity—that of curiosity. Although to a known enemy it is the most timid of creatures, yet in the presence of an object that is new to it, it appears to throw aside its timidity, or rather its curiosity overcomes its sense of fear; and, impelled by the former, it will approach very near to any strange form, and regard it with an air of bewilderment. The prairie-wolf—a creature that surpasses even the fox in cunning—well knows this weakness of the antelope, and often takes advantage of it. The wolf is less fleet than the antelope, and his pursuit of it in a direct manner would be vain; but with the astute creature, stratagem makes up for the absence of speed. Should a 'band' of antelopes chance to be passing, the prairie-wolf lays himself flat upon the grass, clews his body into a round ball, and thus rolls himself over the ground, or goes through a series of contortions, all the while approaching nearer to his victims, until he has them within springing distance!

Usually he is assisted in these manœuvres by several companions, for the prairie-wolf is social, and hunts in packs.

The square of bright colours soon produced its effect. The five prong-horns came trotting around the edge of the lake, halted, gazed upon it a moment, and then dashed off again to a greater distance. Soon, however, they turned and came running back, this time apparently with greater confidence, and a stronger feeling of curiosity. I could hear them uttering their quick 'snorts' as they tossed up their tiny heads and snuffed the air. Fortunately, the wind was in my favour, blowing directly from the game, and towards me; otherwise, they would have 'winded' me, and discovered the cheat, for they both know and fear the scent of the human hunter.

The band consisted of a young buck and four females—his wives; the nucleus, no doubt, of a much larger establishment in prospect—for the antelope is polygamous, and some of the older males have an extensive following. I knew the buck by his greater size and forking horns, which the does want. He appeared to direct the actions of the others, as they all stood in a line behind him, following and imitating his motions.

At the second approach, they came within a hundred yards of me. My rifle was equal to this range, and I prepared to fire. The leader was nearest me, and him I selected as the victim. Taking sight, I pulled trigger. As soon as the smoke cleared off, I had the satisfaction of seeing the buck down upon the prairie, in the act of giving his last kick. To my surprise, none of the others had been frightened off by the report, but stood gazing at their fallen leader, apparently bewildered.

I bethought me of reloading; but I had incautiously risen to my feet, and so revealed my form to the eyes of the antelopes. This produced an effect which neither the crack of the rifle nor the fall of their comrade had done; and the now terrified animals wheeled about and sped away like the wind. In less than two minutes, they were beyond the reach of vision.

The next question that arose was how I was to get across the barranca. The tempting morsel lay upon the other side, and I therefore set about examining the chasm in order to find a practicable crossing. This I fortunately discovered. On both sides, the cliff was somewhat broken down, and might be scaled, though not without considerable difficulty.

After once more looking to the security of my horse's trail-ropes, I placed my rifle where I had slept, and set out to cross the barranca, taking only my knife. I could have no use for the gun, and it would hinder me in scaling the cliffs. I got to the bottom of the ravine, and commenced ascending on the opposite side where it was steeper; but I was assisted by the branches of the trailing cedar that grew among the rocks. I noticed, and with some surprise, that the path must have been used before, either by men or animals.

The soil that lay upon the ledges was 'paddled' as by feet, and the rock in some places scratched and discoloured. These indications only caused me a momentary reflection. I was too hungry to dwell upon any thought but that of eating.

At length I reached the scarp of the cliff, and climbing out upon the prairie, soon stood over the carcass of the prong-horn. My knife was out, and next moment I was busy playing the part of butcher.

You will no doubt fancy that the next thing I did was to go in search of something to make a fire for the purpose of cooking. I did nothing of the sort; the next thing I did was to eat my breakfast. *I ate it raw*; and had you been in my situation, delicate as you are, you would have done the same.

It is true that, after I had satisfied the first cravings

of appetite with the tongue of the antelope and a few morsels of steak, I became more fastidious, and thought a little roasting might improve the venison. For this purpose, I was about to return to the barranca, in order to gather some sticks of the cedar-wood, when my eyes fell upon an object that drove all thoughts of cookery out of my head, and sent a thrill of terror to my heart. The object in question was a large animal, which I at once recognised as the *grizzly bear*, the most dreaded of all creatures that inhabit the prairie.

#### LETTERS OF JAMES BOSWELL.\*

THE ripened fame and acceptance of that extraordinary book, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, gives an interest to the personality of the author, which no one seems to have felt when he was alive. A series of characteristic letters by him, illustrated by biographic particulars, is therefore pretty sure of attracting public attention. At first, we suspected it to be a volume of forgeries; but, on inspection, we find the genuineness of the letters to be beyond doubt. They were addressed, throughout the course of thirty-seven years, to a bosom-friend of the writer, a certain Rev. Mr Temple, living in an obscure Cornish rectory. A most singular revelation of personal character they form—the outpouring of the feelings of a man not without talents, acquirements, and good aspirations, but altogether deficient in prudence, dignity, and suitableness for the world's ordinary affairs—one who was not much worse in essential respects than most of his neighbours, but who put himself at the feet of them all by his silly forwardness, love of notoriety, and the constant self-composure of a babbling tongue. For the first half of the book, we altogether doubted the use of its publication, beyond the gratification of those curious in literary history; while of the justifiableness of making such an exposé of the personal vices, weaknesses, and domestic circumstances of one who died only sixty years since, and who has left numerous descendants, there seemed to us to be—something more than doubts. But on reaching the end, our conception of the book underwent a change. We then found the life of the man shewing so impressively the futility of all hopes of happiness based on the mere gratification of vanity and sensual appetites, we found the ultra-gaiety of the clever coxcombical youth ending in such expressions of pain and sorrow, the natural fruits of a long course of dissipation, that we believed the book might prove to have been well worth publishing.

Boswell occupied a position in society of which Englishmen, knowing him only by his books, have in general an inadequate conception. He was, by birth and connections, emphatically a gentleman. The eldest son and heir of a landed man occupying the dignified position of a judge, and himself a member of the Scotch bar, he had the fairest prospects in life—might have looked to a great marriage, to entering parliament, to high state employment. We find that, even in his own time, the family estates were £1600 a year. In the ensuing generation, they were probably of considerably more than twice that value, and it seemed but in the fair course of things that a British baronetcy was then conferred on the family. All these advantages Boswell in a great measure forfeited by the literary and social tastes which led him to be the companion of London wits, and enabled him to pen the immortal book which bears his name. Perhaps it were impossible for any Englishman to imagine the eccentricity of Boswell as viewed in reference to the Ayrshire gentry and Edinburgh noblesse *de robe* amongst whom he sprang into existence, or those Calvinistic doctrines and sober maxims of life which ought in the course of nature to have descended to him.

\* Bentley, London, 1857. 8vo, pp. 408.



The letters to Mr Temple first exhibit Boswell in youth, enthusiastic in study, but doubtful how to direct himself in life. He is constantly engaged in some affair of the heart, which comes to nothing. Already, he haunts the society of such literary men as then dwelt in Edinburgh. Before he was full one-and-twenty, he had dipped into the gaieties of London, and found their congeniality. 'A young fellow,' he says, 'whose happiness was always centered in London, who had at last got there, and had begun to taste its delights, who had got his mind filled with the most gay ideas—getting into the Guards, being about court, enjoying the happiness of the *beau-monde* and the company of men of genius, in short, everything that he could wish—consider this poor fellow hauled away to the town of Edinburgh, obliged to conform to every Scotch custom or be laughed at—"Will you have some jeel? oh fie! oh fie!"—his flighty imagination quite cramped, and he obliged to study *Corpus Juris Civilis*, and live in his father's strict family; is there any wonder, sir, that the unlucky dog should be somewhat fretful? Yoke a Newmarket courser to a dung-cart, and I'll lay my life on't he'll either caper and kick most confoundedly, or be as stupid and restive as an old, battered post-horse.'

His father early saw how much he was disposed to break bounds, and tried to control him with good counsel. 'Honest man!' says Boswell, 'he is now very happy: it is amazing to think how much he has had at heart my pursuing the road of civil life; he is anxious for fear I should fall off from my prudent system, and return to my dissipated, unsettled way of thinking; and, in order to make him easy, he insists on having my solemn promise that I will persist in the scheme on which he is so earnestly bent: he knows my fidelity, and he concludes that my promise will fix me. Indeed, he is much in the right; the only question is, how much I am to promise. I think I may promise thus much: that I shall from this time study propriety of conduct, and to be a man of knowledge and prudence, as far as I can; that I shall make as much improvement as possible while I am abroad, and when I return, shall put on the gown as a member of the Faculty of Advocates, and be upon the footing of a gentleman of business, with a view to my getting into parliament. My father talks of my setting out soon, but says he will soon write to me fixing my allowance; I imagine, therefore, that I shall go the week after next. I feel no small reluctance at leaving this great metropolis, which I heartily agree with you is the best place in the world to live in. My dear friend, I find that London must be the place where I shall pass a great part of my life, if I wish to pass it with satisfaction. I hope we shall spend many happy years there, when we are both settled as to views of life and habits of living; in the meantime, let me endeavour to acquire steadiness and constant propriety of conduct, without which we never can enjoy what I fondly hope for.'

He went to study law in Utrecht, and in 1766, when twenty-six years old, induced the gown of a Scotch advocate. For a time, he seems to have got some business, chiefly through the indirect effect of his father being on the bench. But Edinburgh was an alien scene, and the whim of the moment was always the guide of Boswell. With inconsistency in which he is, we fear, far from singular, he explicitly tells his clerical friend of a disgraceful connection he has formed, and in the same letter speaks with complacency of going to chapel, and 'looking up to the Lord of the Universe with a grateful remembrance of the grand and mysterious propitiation which Christianity has announced.' In the midst of the same circumstances, but writing from Auchinleck, his father's country-seat, he talks of a respectable marriage. 'What say you to my marrying? I intend, next autumn, to

visit Miss Bosville, in Yorkshire; but I fear, my lot being cast in Scotland, that beauty would not be content. She is, however, grave; I shall see. There is a young lady in the neighbourhood here who has an estate of her own—between two and three hundred a year—just eighteen, a genteel person, an agreeable face, of a good family, sensible, good-tempered, cheerful, pious. You know my grand object is the ancient family of Auchinleck—a venerable and noble principle. How would it do to conclude an alliance with the neighbouring princess, and add her lands to our dominions? I should at once have a very pretty little estate, a good house, and a sweet place. My father is very fond of her; it would make him perfectly happy: he gives me hints in this way:—"I wish you had her—no bad scheme this; I think, a very good one." But I will not be in a hurry; there is plenty of time. I will take to myself the advice I wrote to you from Naples, and go to London a while before I marry. I am not yet quite well, but am in as good a way as can be expected. My fair neighbour was a ward of my father's; she sits in our seat at church in Edinburgh; she would take possession here most naturally. This is a superb place; we have the noblest natural beauties, and my father has made most extensive improvements. We look ten miles out upon our own dominions; we have an excellent new house. I am now writing in a library forty feet long. Come to us, my dearest friend; we will live like the most privileged spirits of antiquity.'

He could also get drunk in drinking Miss Blair's health, for that was the name of his princess. But that, to be sure, was the fashion of the age. There are many letters containing little besides the details of this love affair. The lady seems to have penetrated the volatile superficial character of her lover. She never could be brought to the point. Tormented with her coolness, he in one letter congratulates himself on escaping from a coquette, and in the next, has resumed all his former admiration. He thus describes one of their interviews: 'On Monday forenoon I waited on Miss B. I found her alone, and she did not seem distant; I told her that I was most sincerely in love with her, and that I only dreaded those faults which I had acknowledged to her. I asked her seriously if she now believed me in earnest. She said she did. I then asked her to be candid and fair, as I had been with her, and to tell me if she had any particular liking for me. What think you, Temple, was her answer? "No, I really have no particular liking for you; I like many people as well as you." Temple, you must have it in the genuine dialogue.

'Boswell. Do you, indeed? Well, I cannot help it; I am obliged to you for telling me so in time. I am sorry for it.

'Princess. I like Jenny Maxwell (Duchess of Gordon) better than you.

'B. Very well; but do you like no man better than me?

'P. No.

'B. Is it possible that you may like me better than other men?

'P. I don't know what is possible.

'(By this time I had risen and placed myself by her, and was in real agitation.)

'B. I'll tell you what, my dear Miss Blair, I love you so much that I am very unhappy if you cannot love me. I must, if possible, endeavour to forget you. What would you have me do?

'P. I really don't know what you should do.

'B. It is certainly possible that you may love me; and if you shall ever do so, I shall be the happiest man in the world. Will you make a fair bargain with me? If you should happen to love me, will you own it?

'P. Yes.

'B. And if you should happen to love another, will you tell me immediately, and help me to make myself easy?

'P. Yes, I will.

'B. Well, you are very good (often squeezing and kissing her fine hand, while she looked at me with those beautiful black eyes).

'P. I may tell you, as a cousin, what I would not tell to another man.

'B. You may indeed. You are very fond of Auchinleck—that is one good circumstance.

'P. I confess I am. I wish I liked you as well as I do Auchinleck.

'B. I have told you how fond I am of you; but, unless you like me sincerely, I have too much spirit to ask you to live with me, as I know that you do not like me. If I could have you this moment for my wife, I would not.

'P. I should not like to put myself in your offer though.

'B. Remember, you are both my cousin and my mistress, you must make me suffer as little as possible, as it may happen that I may engage your affections. I should think myself a most dishonourable man if I were not now in earnest, and, remember, I depend upon your sincerity; and whatever happens, you and I shall never have another quarrel.

'P. Never.

'B. And I may come and see you as much as I please?

'P. Yes.

'My worthy friend, what sort of a scene was this? It was most curious. She said she would submit to her husband in most things. She said that to see one loving her would go far to make her love that person; but she would not talk anyhow positively, for she never had felt the uneasy anxiety of love. We were an hour and a half together, and seemed pleased all the time. I think she behaved with spirit and propriety. I admire her more than ever.'

He at length considered himself as off with Miss Blair, and at liberty to pay his vows to a pretty young cousin, a Miss Montgomerie, the daughter of an Irish counsellor, who was visiting near him in Ayrshire. What a curious revelation of a human heart! In August, 'I was allowed to walk a great deal with Miss —; I repeated my fervent passion to her again and again; she was pleased, and I could swear that her little heart beat. She promised not to forget me, or marry a lord before March.' This was 'all youthful, warm, natural—in short, genuine love.' Soon after, he learned that Miss Blair was still within reach. He revisited her, and relapsed into the former fever. 'I walked whole hours with the Princess; I kneeled; I became truly amorous; but she told me that she had a very great regard for me, but did not like me so as to marry me.' 'Then came a kind letter from my amiable Aunt Boyd in Ireland, and all the charms of sweet Mary Anne revived. Since that time, I have been quite constant to her, and as indifferent towards Kate as if I never had thought of her.' The problem came to a solution next year by his marrying Miss Montgomerie.

The cares and responsibilities of matrimony never had any effect in steadying Boswell's giddy course. At five-and-forty, after comparatively failing at the Scotch, he entered at the English bar. The change of position only expanded his indulgences, not his fortunes. We find him confessing that he had all his life been straitened for money. Can we wonder at it in one who made the following of his whims and the indulgence of his tastes and appetites the rule of his life? Poor Boswell! It is melancholy to find that, while preparing his wonderful book, the disappointment of his professional failure, the pinch of genteel poverty, and the rough railery of the Northern

Circuit, all pressed sore upon his spirit. Reared amongst an intemperate set, he gradually became more and more addicted to liquor—was constantly resolving to abstain—but always relapsing. For a long time, he had hopes of getting a government place; looking to parliamentary influence in Ayrshire as a purchase against the minister; but all ended in disappointment. By some influence with the Earl of Lonsdale, he did obtain the situation of Recorder of Carlisle; but it does not seem to have brought an income, and the connection came to a painful termination, the noble lord and his dependent having a violent quarrel, as thus recorded: 'Upon his seeing me by no means in good-humour, he challenged it roughly, and said: "I suppose you thought I was to bring you into parliament; I never had any such intention." In short, he expressed himself in the most degrading manner, in presence of a low man from Carlisle, and one of his menial servants! The miserable state of low spirits I had, as you too well know, laboured under for some time before, made me almost sink under such unexpected insulting behaviour. He insisted rigorously on my having solicited the office of Recorder of Carlisle; and that I could not, without using him ill, resign it, until the duties which were now required of it were fulfilled, and without a sufficient time being given for the election of a successor. Thus was I dragged away, as wretched as a convict; and in my fretfulness, I used such expressions as irritated him almost to fury, so that he used such expressions towards me, that I should have, according to the irrational laws of honour sanctioned by the world, been under the necessity of risking my life, had not an explanation taken place. This happened during the first stage. The rest of the journey was barely tolerable: we got to Lancaster on Saturday night, and there I left him to the turmoil of a desperate attempt in electioneering. I proceeded to Carlisle last night, and to-day have been signing orders as to poor's-rates. I am alone at an inn, in wretched spirits, and ashamed and sunk on account of the disappointment of hopes, which led me to endure such grievances. I deserve all that I suffer.'

What a lesson on the sorrows of slothful dependence, as contrasted with honest independent hard work and self-denial!

The letters of the last five years tell us of little but illness and depression of spirits—a sad contrast to the frivolous gaiety of those written in youth. Boswell sank, to all appearance under the consequences of dissipation, at the too early age of fifty-five (May 1795).

## NATURAL HISTORY OF MY POND.

### IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

Nor far from my residence is a little sunny pool—not one of those dirty, green, stagnant ponds which breathe pestilence, but a clear bright pool, with a pure stream of water flowing through it, white in the spring-time with flowers of the water-crowfoot, and in summer, gay with blossoms of the flowering-rush and the purple loosestrife, whilst a few water-lilies float like a group of royal bridesmaids on its surface. My Pond does not extend over quite half an acre of ground; on one side it is bounded by a few stunted willow-trees, which bend their boughs gracefully toward it; while on the other, many of the common water-plants grow at the margin, and give occasional shelter to a vagrant water-hen. None of these have, however, to my knowledge, become permanent residents in my pool. Though my domain is not extensive, yet it is to me a perfect vivarium; and, in gratitude for the pleasure it has often given to me, I have determined to write the story of its inhabitants; not the occasional rarities, but the well-known familiar faces who may always be met with in the right

times and seasons. It must be only a very slight sketch, though a folio volume might be written on them; so this little memoir must be taken by the reader rather as an introduction, a card allowing him to call and make the acquaintance of my friends at his leisure.

Firstly, there are giants in the pool—there are vertebrate animals, quadrupeds, reptiles, fish. Of the fish there is not, indeed, much to say; it is difficult to see much of them, and the only approach to familiarity between us is when a carp rises to take a crumb of bread thrown upon the water for him. There are, besides, the minnow and the common stickleback; and a legendary story exists of a pike having been seen there, but this is not given upon good authority, and the splash witnessed by my informant was more probably caused by a water-rat diving from the bank. Of the fish, the one which to me possesses most interest is the stickleback, the male becomes such a beau in spring-time; and, besides this, they have more wit than fish in general, for the female does not leave her eggs to the chance mercy of the winds and waves, but builds a nice compact little nest amongst the water-plants; and over this the male keeps watch, as a good and true husband should, and no water-beetle or dragon-fly larva dare venture within his reach: he is ever ready, lance in hand, to do battle with all comers.

Great favourites of mine are the newts, both the larger and smaller species. Gorgeous fellows are the males in their wooing-dress, with their orange breasts and crested backs; and very amusing are they to watch. One of these Adonises of My Pond may be often seen escorting some fair dame, and shewing his agility by every means in his power, doing his utmost to make himself agreeable; and when the nuptial-time is over, the interest does not cease, for the offspring also are much to be admired: they are not, like the vulgar tadpoles, pertaining to the toads and frogs, but evidently an aristocratic race, adorned with large feathery branchiæ, fringing their necks like those goodly collars that were worn by our great-great-grandmothers in the glorious days of Good Queen Bess. Frogs and toads are there also; the former jump nimbly enough into the pool at my approach. Poor beings! they seem to have been made for the physiologist as sheep for the butcher; and it is to be feared that mine are not always safe from this their usual fate; yet the supply never fails, and in the spring the pool is ever musical with their love-notes: the first sounds which tell us of the coming of warm weather. However unpoetical such an opinion may be, it is yet true that these tender murmurings of the frogs are the earliest harbingers of spring; they are heard long, long before the swallow, before even the wild-bee and the primrose make their appearance; and the snow-drop is rather the offspring of winter than the promise of its departure.

But there are higher vertebrates dwelling in My Pool than frogs and newts; the splash of the water-rat as it leaps from the bank may be heard frequently; and if you watch, the furrow on the surface will soon point him out, dimly visible, immersed beneath the water, yet swimming along bravely; or he may be seen, when he has gained the opposite bank, making his way stealthily up to his hole. But the name of rat, like the idle gossip of a country-town, sticks to him; and though he does not deserve it, and the rat of the town bears little relationship to the rat of the country, yet it prejudices him in the eyes of all, and, it must be confessed, he is no favourite of mine. There is another little animal which ranks especially high in my opinion; he comes gently down from the bank towards the evening, and begins his aquatic sports, looking, as he swims in and out amongst the water-lily leaves, not unlike a great water-beetle; but the glossy hair glistening with air-bubbles will soon detect him, and his

sharp muzzle marks him to be a shrew-mouse. By keeping perfectly quiet, you may watch his gambols for a long time—now swimming on the surface, now diving beneath it, or sporting among the water-weeds. There is nowhere to be found a more engaging animal than this little shrew: he is one of the greatest ornaments of My Pond, or rather, it should be said, they are, for there are generally a pair to be seen playing together. Nor is it, indeed, always play, for the earnest way in which they push their long snouts amongst the water-plants shews that there is a purpose in their movements. No wonder they are favourites of mine, for they give me much amusement in the calm summer evenings. The shrew used to participate in the ill-feeling that appertained to 'witches, warlocks, and all lang-nebbit things,' and the land species was deemed the cause of many an evil by our simple ancestors; but our amphibious friend was probably then unknown.

It is not, however, vertebrate, but articulated or jointed animals which My Pond yields in the greatest plenty. It is easy to obtain several species of the crab-kind, or crustaceans, two or three spiders, very many insects, and several of the less-organised examples of the group. Of the crustaceans, the most conspicuous example is a small shrimp (*Gammarus pulex*), looking like a sandhopper. He need scarcely be described, for every one must know him, as he is probably a denizen of almost every pool in the kingdom. He is active, and chases about the smaller animals in a relentless manner; and he may boast, also, of being my largest crustacean, for the others are much smaller, scarcely exceeding a pin's-head in size. The commonest of these (*Cyclops quadricornis*) is known easily by the two egg-bags which the female carries by the side of her tail. No wonder that this species is abundant, for Jurine calculates that at the end of one year a single female would have become the progenitor of 4,442,189,120 young! And this is probably too low an estimate. The young are produced in a state very unlike the parent, and it is some days before they assume the adult form, the time changing with the warmth of the weather and with the light admitted to them. The specimens found in My Pool vary much both in colour and size; some are black, others olive-green, whilst the most frequent are of a yellowish white. They are very active, and move deftly through the water, but may be easily seen with the naked eye. Under a common magnifying-glass, all their parts can be distinctly noted, and especially the peculiarity which has gained them their name—the fact of their having only one eye. There is another species (*Daphnia pulex*) rather larger than this, which may be often seen in swarms among the water-plants, especially in sunny weather. All of this little being, except the head, is enclosed within the valves of a delicate shell; these valves have no hinge, but are open in front, and simply soldered together along the posterior edge; the animal possesses, however, some power of opening or shutting them at will: this is the water-flea, a merry, harmless little being, having of course no right or title whatever to the name of flea, except for its activity. Donovan gives an amusing, though very unfavourable account of it: he says, 'by numerous filaments which it darts forth, it causes such a motion in the water as to attract unresistingly the insects floating into its mouth. Thus it exists in a life of rapine and destruction, enjoyed at the expense of the lives of thousands; and as the objects of its ravenous disposition are defenceless, so are they the sport of their conqueror. The few moments of intermission its craving appetite grants them are occupied equally in the spoil, first pressing them to death, and then tossing them undevoured into the fluid. But should a more powerful insect oppose him, he immediately contracts his parts, and nothing more than the external covering is open to his antagonist's violence, and he will sooner die ignobly than offer the least opposition!' There is a curious



provision with regard to the multiplication of this little being: the female lays two kinds of eggs—the one in summer, which soon produces young; but the other just before the approach of winter. This lies for some time upon the back of the animal like a saddle, and has hence been called the ephippium; it contains two eggs. These are able to resist the cold of winter, which is fatal to the perfect animal. 'This ephippium floats on the surface of the water, and remains with the two eggs enclosed till next spring, when the young are hatched by the returning warmth of the season.' These two kind of eggs shew that the preservation even of the most insignificant of beings is abundantly provided for. There is in the pond a far prettier species (*Cypris vidua*) than either of the two mentioned. Draw a plant of callitriche to land, and there will probably be found a specimen of this little crustacean entangled in it. It has a shell very much like that of a bivalve mollusk, of a white colour, with a slight tinge of green, and on this shell are three black stripes. It not only swims with great activity, but runs actively along the leaves of the water-plants, or along the bottom of the pool. The shell differs from that of the water-flea before described in being open, except in the middle third of the dorsal surface, where there is a true ligamentous hinge and muscles, by which the animal can open or shut the shell at its pleasure. In appearance, it much resembles a very small muscle, but of course can be known at once from any bivalve shell by its movements and by its four legs. There is more than one species of this elegant little shell in My Pond; but the one described is the most frequent, and also the most beautiful. We shall finish the 'first fyfte' of our history with it, and commence the next with the spiders.

The only species of spiders which My Pond contains all belong to one genus (*Arachnida*); they seem like overgrown mites of a reddish-brown colour (*Hydrachna globulus*), and about the size of a sweet-pea seed; but they are rapacious enough, and undergo, in the early stages of their life, some strange metamorphoses. Being then parasitic upon the large water-beetles, they are rather amusing to keep and watch, from the variety and agility of their movements. Their respiration is, like that of insects, by air-tubes, which ramify in the body. Of the ordinary pulmonary or lung-breathing spiders, My Pond has no example.

Next to these come the insects, and of these, firstly, the beetles; and here it is not possible to enumerate one-quarter of the examples of this tribe found in My Pond. Size gives the precedence to the Dytisci (*Dytiscus marginalis*)—large oval beetles, nearly two inches in length, of a bronze-black colour, but light-brown on the reversed side. They may be always seen swimming among the water-weeds, urging themselves on by the aid of their powerful hind limbs, which they use as oars. I kept one of these for a long time. During the day, he remained quietly in the water; but at night, he would make excursions round the room, and seemed to have a particular penchant for flying in the faces of those who entered his apartment. He was fed upon wasps, and on these he thrived well, until one day a specimen not quite dead was put into the vase in which he lived, and he was stung, and died in consequence. Curious beings are the larvae of these water-beetles: they have six legs at the front-part of a long fishlike body, and the odd, flat, square head is armed with powerful jaws. They swim rapidly along by aid of the tail, and are, like the perfect insect, very voracious in their habits. Besides these larger water-beetles, there are many of lesser size, some extremely like the Dytisci: these are Colymbetes; and there are several species in the pond. There are many other genera; but space will only allow us to notice the whirligig-beetles (*Gyrinus natator*). These are probably

familiar to all lovers of angling; indeed, they have gained a classic fame through the mention made of them by old Izaak Walton. On the surface of the pond they are to be always seen, dressed in shining blue-black coats. They keep up a constant quadrille, making their ball-room out of some quiet little bay in the pool: there is one spot especially, fringed by rushes, and with a large pond-weed shutting it out from the external world, that they seem particularly fond of. It is very pleasant to watch them. They are the idlest beings in My Pool, the veriest triflers in existence, dancing away all their lives; and yet other beings might more easily be spared from my aquarium than these merry whirligigs.

The dragon-flies, and the species allied to them, must be noticed next to the beetles; and though it must be confessed that they do not live in the water during their adult life, yet they haunt the pool so much that it is perfectly just to class them as denizens of it. The flies themselves must be first described. There is one of a sky-blue colour, with only a few rings of black; its body is scarcely thicker than a large pin, and its wings are of the most delicate gauze (*Agrion furcatum*). Surely there is nothing dragon-like in this. The French term them, with far more politeness, *petites demoiselles*. There is another species (*A. minium*) much like this in figure, but with the body of a deep-red colour; and there is a third kind also common here, smaller than these, with a body nearly approaching to black, except a single broad band of blue near the tail (*A. zonatum*); this is a very common, but a very pretty and delicate little dragon-fly. One of the red species has just vindicated its title to the name by seizing on one of the little brassy green flies (*Dolichopus aeneus*) so frequent on the herbage by the pool. It has borne him off safely to the leaf of a water-plumtree, to devour at leisure. Let us leave him in quiet possession of his meal, and take a walk round by the willow-trees; we shall not fail there to find another species (*Culex virgo*), with a body of glossy purple, and dark purple wings, the lady being, however, green, and with wings of a more sober brown colour. This is one of the most lovely of our native species; not very active, however, fitting rather than flying from leaf to leaf, and rarely taking long flights. There is one larger species (*Libellula depressa*) also, which must be noticed, whose habits are the very reverse of this. It may always be seen at the pool on a sunny day in summer. The body is of a slaty-blue colour, and flattened; and the wings, though transparent, are shaded with dark-brown at the base. This is a perfect tyrant, darting round the pool with the speed of lightning, and having the swiftest flight of any of the dragon-flies. He lords it over the whole pool, only settling just for a moment on some decayed twig or broken bough at the water's edge, and then, probably, because he has made a capture of some unfortunate victim. He makes his prey not only on gnats and lesser flies, but on caddis-flies of large size, or even on a wandering butterfly. Other dragon-flies come as occasional guests; but these are true inhabitants, and may always be met with. The interest is not confined to the perfect fly, for they can easily be caught in their previous stages of life, which gives them more than ever a right to claim the citizenship of My Pond, for this early life is passed beneath its waters. The larva is a busy, active, and rapacious creature, propelling himself forward by sucking water in at the tail, and then forcing it out violently: this answers the double purpose of supplying his system with the oxygen from the air dissolved in the water, and of forcing him onwards. The pupa is chiefly remarkable for the jointed lower-lip which is used to take its prey in the manner of a hand, and which covers the face like a mask. It is like the larva, active and voracious; but before its final change, comes out of the water on one of the

broad leaves of the plants near, there casts its slough, spreads its wings to the sunshine, and flies off as one of the glorious beings we have been watching. See! this burst of evening sun has brought out one of the flat-bodied species we were talking of just now: he has settled for one moment, with outspread wings, on the summit of one of the flag-leaves; now he is off again, darting round the pool; his supper does not 'yet run a-foot,' but it is flying somewhere, and has to be earned before he can get it.

We will now turn to the more peaceful ephemera or day-flies. Poor creatures! their perfect life is but a brief one. There are in the pool more than one species, but the commonest is a large fellow (*Ephemera vulgata*), a bashaw of three tails, and with curiously mottled wings. He dances up and down for a few hours in the summer evening, and the next morning you find him with outstretched wings floating on the pool. Has my reader ever been to the Rhine in summer?—he will then know well what an ephemeron is. As soon as evening comes, myriads of a snow-white species of these *wasser-fliegen* haunt you everywhere; incessant swarms pass by you on the steamers, so that you always seem sailing through some long cloud of flies. They come to your lights in swarms, until literally heaps of them lie dead upon your table; they are in your tea, in your milk; your butter is covered by a delicate layer of them; they are everywhere; turn where you will, you are surrounded by these emblems of the frailty of life. Our ephemeron often dances in merry groups over the water; but swarms like these are quite unknown. The larvæ of these flies are very beautiful; the tufts of branchiæ, or appendages for breathing, which are arranged down each side, are most elegant in form, and in constant play. They are best met with in the spring-time. Like the dragon-fly, the pupa comes out of the water to undergo its change; but even when the perfect insect appears, it is for about an hour clothed with another tunic, which has to be cast off before it is quite complete.

Nearly allied to these, we have the group of caddis-flies. Their wings are four, covered with hairs instead of being gauze-like and transparent. We shall not fail to find some species on the stumps of the willow-trees. The commonest of the group is a large brown fellow (*Phryganea grandis*), with long antennæ. We have many species on the pool. The larvæ are always to be found; they construct for themselves cases, made out of fragments of stick and sand, open at both ends. They walk along the bottom of the pond in rather an awkward manner, carrying their houses on their backs, into which they retreat in case of danger. Some of the cases are constructed with great regularity. There are many species inhabiting the pool, but the one mentioned is certainly the commonest.

Look! here is one of the next tribe (*Hydrometra*) which must fall under our notice. He glides over the surface of the water as quickly in proportion as any six-oared gig in a boat-race; his body is pointed before and behind like a London wherry; and his two middle legs urge him on much as a pair of oars would do. There are more than one species in the pond. Their gambols are very amusing, though there is a degree of awkwardness in the movements of their long legs. Sometimes they attempt a dance, as the whirligigs, but they have not the same graceful ease in their movements; sometimes, but rarely, they are provided with wings.

Belonging to the same group, but to a different section, are the water-boatmen (*Notonecta glauca*). These always swim upon their backs: they rest on the surface of the water, or rather with their tails at the surface, basking in the sunshine; but let your hand approach, and a stroke of their powerful oars takes them away speedily amongst the water-

plants. They are very amusing beings—in the daytime swimming about the pool, in the night, making aerial excursions into the neighbourhood. Nearly allied to these is the brown water-scorpion (*Nepa cinerea*), so called from its anterior pair of feet bearing a very distant resemblance to the mandibles of the real scorpion, to which, it need scarcely be said, it bears no true relationship.

There are some moths even which must be claimed as citizens. If one of the floating pond-weeds be drawn to the banks, we shall not fail to find on it a number of curious shields cut out of the leaf, oval in shape, and looking somewhat like the case of the caddis-fly. These (*Hydrocampa potamogeta*), which thus pass their lives in these little tents, come out in July as the pretty moths commonly known by the name of China-marks, from their wings being marked with a curious and beautiful pattern of a brownish-yellow colour. There is another species to be found upon the water-lilies (*H. nymphaeata*); and another, still commoner, which makes a long cylindrical case out of the fronds of the lesser duckweed (*H. lemnata*).

The only remaining insects which can be said to be true natives of the pond, are a few two-winged flies; and of these the gnats are the species which have the most right to the privileges of citizenship, since, like the dragon-flies, their early life is passed in the water. There are abundance of kinds which haunt the margins: these are only guests; but the gnats live there by far the greatest portion of their lives. It is curious to see the female deposit her eggs: she alights carefully and steadily upon the water, and, guiding herself by the hind feet, builds a perfect little canoe of eggs, which floats off upon the surface of the pond; and sometimes a large fleet of these may be seen sailing along together. From these the well-known larva emerges; this breathes by its tail, and therefore is often to be seen head downwards, suspended at the top of the water. The pupæ have not legs like those of the dragon-flies, and therefore the change takes place in the pond, the insect emerging from its shell as it floats upon the surface: this requires great caution, and is a period of great danger to the insect, a passing breeze often consigning many to a watery grave. Myriads, however, still exist, and are, it must be confessed, rather troublesome friends, being frequently too kind in their attentions. With them, the account of my insect acquaintance must be concluded, hoping my reader may be preserved from their attacks, whether as gnats or mosquitoes, until we meet again.

#### MATRIMONIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

THE art of getting married is practised in many different ways in different parts of the world. This statement, admitting of no dispute, need not be illustrated with examples. I will not detail to a well-informed public, whose ear has been bored, figuratively speaking, with numerous particulars of the same kind, the manner in which the Cingalese and the Chinese, and other hes, take wives unto themselves. It is generally known that, among barbarous nations, and occasionally among some that are not barbarous, the marriage-ceremony is but the clenching of a bargain, the arrangement by which certain goods—item one bride, item one marriage-portion, &c.—are assigned and delivered over to the purchaser. It is also to be gathered from the pages of history, that the same ceremony, performed between royal personages, has been more frequently an alliance between nations than individuals, a *gage*, not so much *d'amour* as *d'amitié*; that the daughter of a royal house has been sent as a peace-offering to a dangerous neighbour, and that the fair hostage has received the title of queen with the name of a wife, her position being less fitly represented

by the golden circlet on the finger, than by that on the head.

These are subjects on which, as a moralist, I conceive that the less said the better. Nor will it be considered that the art of getting married, as practised in our own country, requires much elucidation. Much learned disquisition and many bad jokes have been brought to bear upon that question. I refrain from venturing on a topic which has been elaborately treated of in various works in three volumes. But the art is now practised elsewhere in a manner so entirely distinct from former experience, that it seems to claim a little attention.

The method in question has lately come into use in America, and is intimately connected with the discovery of photography. There is an illustrated periodical published in New York, called the *Ledger of Romance*, which allots a portion of its space to what is called 'Matrimonial Correspondence.' Under this head, ladies and gentlemen who desire to enter into the bonds of wedlock, insert descriptions of themselves and of the paragon they are in search of. Occasionally a portrait is sent—usually a photograph—which is engraved above the description. Sometimes a name is given, but more commonly an initial, the address being confided to the editor, who 'mails' all letters, sent by way of reply, to the respective parties.

It may be said that this is only a variety of the matrimonial agency said to exist in Paris, and not entirely unknown in our own country. There is, however, this important distinction between the two—that whereas in France the negotiation is conducted with some degree of privacy, and is known only to the persons interested, or supposed to be so, in America the candidate publishes his offer to the world at large. It is not very difficult to imagine how the system is found to operate. Celebs, who goes little into society, or whose tastes are fastidious, takes up this valuable paper, say at breakfast, and straightway his eye falls upon that pink of perfection which he has sought for in vain. The hand, with its piece of buttered cake, is stayed on its way to his mouth, he bends eagerly over the description, his coffee perhaps grows cold, but no matter—he thinks she would suit him! Presently he draws up an account of his own advantages, and forwards it to the editor. Perhaps a photograph goes with it; but engraved portraits do not admit of being highly coloured, while those of the pen do: usually, therefore, he prefers the latter. The rest is darkness and silence. The imagination of the uninitiated reader must supply the dénouement. In the observation of scientific phenomena, we note effects the causes of which are frequently concealed, but in this experimental philosophy of matrimony, the causes lie on the surface, while the effects are left to conjecture.

The 'gentlemen's department' of this correspondence is likely to be the more amusing to the general reader, shewing as it does the several candidates to be possessed of every merit, except perhaps that of modesty. If we may take the various statements *au pied de la lettre*, we shall be surprised to find men of all ranks and very different ages coming forward to find wives. In the number which I hold in my hand, one column is appropriately headed by a military officer, whose portrait represents him in full costume, and who is introduced by the editor with the following flourish of trumpets:

'Col. T. B. M.—e has called at our sanctum with one of Brady's best photographs of himself, and begs that we will present his claims to the fair readers of our paper as a candidate for matrimony. We know the colonel intimately, and can say, that although a few hairs of iron-gray are sprinkled among his raven locks, yet they were caused by exposure among the glades of Florida, and the well-fought fields of Mexico, where he distinguished himself by his valour, and are not sown there by years, for he is but thirty. He holds

a commission in the U. S. army, and his family is one of the oldest in the country. His youthful escapades are pretty generally known among his acquaintance, and hence he is looked upon with some distrust. But we know him to be the very soul of honour, and have advised him thus publicly to confess the error of his past ways, and throw himself upon our fair readers' mercy, in the full confidence that some bright eye may be captivated by his manly beauty, and love and marry him.'

The reason given for the colonel's public appeal is rather novel, and it may be doubted whether the fair readers of the paper would be disposed to extend their pity to a man who is in such bad odour with the ladies who know him, as to be compelled to seek a wife among those who don't.

Next appears the portrait of a gentleman whose hair has been singularly well curled by the artist, and who introduces himself in rhyme:

To all fair ladies who may view this page,  
A gentleman of six-and-twenty years of age  
Politely begs to make his wishes known.  
He would not live—or rather—live alone.  
His form and features let the portrait tell,  
On these his modesty forbids him dwell.  
He needs a lady with a pretty face,  
A modest fortune, and a winning grace,  
A temper suited to an honest mind,  
Which to her slightest wish shall be inclined.  
A mercenary wretch he may be branded,  
But his best wishes are to be most candid:  
She must have money; though indeed at present  
He fears no poverty, still 'tis not pleasant  
To dream or think a day of want may come  
To the young lady whom he leadeth home.  
And yet to prove no sordid ends combine  
To make him pen the seeming selfish line,  
He hereby covenants, agrees, engages  
To settle on herself and the sweet pledges  
Of her affection, all that she may own,  
And asks for his love but her heart alone.

GUSTAVUS EDWARDS.

The ladies will hardly fail to appreciate the charming air of candour, which, like a transparent varnish, shines over this announcement. To dread that 'a day of want may come to the young lady whom he leadeth home'—what could be more amiable, more considerate?

The next correspondent describes himself as a merchant doing a successful business, and alludes to his affairs by asking, 'what a paltry 3000 dollars a year can be to the great house of A—n Brothers & Co.' (the lady he is addressing being in possession of that sum). Then we have an author who candidly says that 'his fortune may be best expressed by an indefinite number of ciphers, with the unit at the left' (meaning the right probably). If, however, he spends his money, he works for more, and has enough to afford a wife every comfort.

Many of these applications appear to be unavailing; nobody comes to be married, nobody comes to be wooed. Others are more fortunate, and I observe one case in which a candidate receives more than one reply. A certain Mr George Hubbard, who describes himself as a widower, and whose portrait represents a pleasant-looking man of middle age, says he would be glad to marry again. Next week, two ladies send their portraits and compliments to him, which are duly presented in the journal. The contrast between the fair rivals is very striking. The first, with the signature of a 'Strong-minded Woman,' describes herself in these terms:

'I am possessed of little sentiment, and do not believe in love in a cottage, and think pork and beans are more necessary to human existence than moonlight rambles or serenades. I am unable to boast of numerous



conquests over the gentlemen, but assure you I am *some* in making pumpkin-pies. I do not understand the glorious art of painting, but my whitewashing will surpass competition. My modesty will not allow a description of my personal appearance, but I will say that I have neither red hair nor freckles. Wishing my various accomplishments may suffice, I beg you will address  
STRONG-MINDED WOMAN.

The second writes in a strain so simple and sincere, that anywhere out of print I should call it charming:

'Mr HUBBARD—I notice in the *Ledger* a picture of yourself: it pleases me exceedingly. I would be happy to open a correspondence with you.

'My age is twenty-two. I don't know how you would be pleased with me, but I truly wish you might, for I feel a deep interest in your picture. I should be happy to write further particulars.—Affectionately yours,  
JENNIE WIGGEN.'

The portrait which accompanies this letter gives a very favourable representation of the writer, but it produced no effect. The ladies may be interested to know that the pumpkin-pie carried the day, and that next week Mr Hubbard wrote a long reply to the Strong-minded Woman, in which he congratulated himself on his good-fortune in having attracted her notice.

The question what the ladies like most always be of deep interest to a large majority of the other sex. That question—the difficulties of which have hardly been diminished by the imaginative powers of writers of fiction—is to some extent elucidated in this correspondence. If any confidence may be placed in the evidence, it appears that prospective husbands are not required to have money; wit is seldom wanted, and good looks can scarcely be said to be at a premium. An amiable disposition is indispensable, and so is youth; a good family very desirable; a manly and honourable nature much in request. Those qualities are required which, in America as here, are comprised in the emphatic word *gentleman*. Tobacco is in general objected to; but cigars, if required, are tolerated. Surely the age of chivalry is indeed gone, when a lady is compelled to endure the 'weeds' on taking a husband, as commonly as to wear them on losing him.

The gentlemen are much more fastidious; one and all of them want something very nearly angelic. They usually take credit to themselves for magnanimously relinquishing some one attribute of perfection. Books on female education condemn the pursuit of surface accomplishments in preference to the more solid acquirements which are really valuable to the mistress of a household. It would appear, however, that the latter are attractive rather to persons of the age of Mr Hubbard, than to younger men.

One young lady, of the interesting name of Lola, appears to have advertised herself in a sheet we have not seen, and to have met with very considerable success; the editor informing her that he had mailed four letters to her this week, keeping back the rest 'because the writers neglected to pay the postage.' Lola exposed her portrait to public competition, and here is in one case the result.

'CHICOPPEE, July 1856.

DEAR SIR—Last week, while perusing your *Ledger of Romance* for August 2, my attention was attracted to a very beautiful picture of Miss Lola C—I of Springfield, Mass. Her picture strikes me exceedingly, and should like very much to cultivate her acquaintance with a view of matrimony. I am a young man twenty-two years old, and most exemplary character; my figure is good, five feet nine inches in height; hair and eyes are black; I am considered handsome by most of the young ladies. I am of good family, and have a good profession. With respect to matrimony, I have always considered it the only thing necessary to complete a man's happiness on this earth, and would most

readily with her enter that state of bliss.—Yours with kind regard,  
DANIEL RAYMOND, Chicopee.'

Another gentleman of the same age is also taken with Lola's picture, and would be happy to make her acquaintance with a view to matrimony; but he adds—or the acquaintance of any other young lady. His chief object is to find a conjugal companion for a tour in Europe.

All this may be amusing to read about—and I hope it is—but in practice it wears a very different aspect. It will not do to judge the manners of a distant though kindred people by our own standard of unconquerable reserve; but the custom of wearing one's heart not on one's sleeve, but in the morning paper, can hardly be regarded in a very favourable light. The purity and delicacy which encircle with a glorious halo the head of young womanhood, seem somewhat imperiled by a process which is little else than a public auction. Even the fortunate man who in personal qualifications outbids his competitors, cannot reflect with much satisfaction on the fact, that she who sits by his side has been the subject of public advertisement. If Celebs cannot find courage to pay his addresses to a lady in the ordinary way, it would surely be better that he should pay his court like Window Wat, without the door, than through the newsman.

#### EMIGRATION TO AMERICA MADE EASY.

THE difficulty an emigrant from Europe finds is not in getting to America. The middle-passage has no horrors for him; but no sooner does his foot touch the soil of republican freedom, than his progress is arrested, and if he should have the good-fortune ever to reach his destination at all, it is not till loss of time, money, and peace of mind has left him half frantic and half a beggar. We are now of course alluding specially to the more ignorant class of emigrants, and to the system of private swindling of which they are the victims; though all classes find more or less difficulty and delay in reaching the part of the continent they are bound for: we are alluding to what the *Toronto Colonist* calls 'the monstrous villainies practised upon emigrants at New York, New Orleans, and other ports—villainies which have hitherto baffled all the ingenuities and all the energies of the many humane societies which have sprung up in New York and other places to protect the unsuspecting and friendless emigrant.'

This great evil, however, from present appearances, seems about to cease; for the acute mind of Mr S. P. Bidder, the general manager of the Grand Junction Railway of Canada, has seen the malignant influence it would exercise against that noble work, and against the tide of emigration to British America. He has devised a plan of *through-bookings* in the great seaports of Europe, by which the emigrant, or traveller, will take his ticket at once to the place of his ultimate destination on the American continent, and will thus avoid the risk of being fleeced or trepanned in the port where he arrives. 'Agreements have already been made by Mr Bidder, with all the leading railways of the United States, by which passengers, whether emigrants or otherwise, will be passed to any part of Northern and Western America upon tickets issued to them in Europe. Thus, passengers who purchase through-tickets from the agents of the Grand Trunk Railway at Havre, Antwerp, Rotterdam, Bremen, and Hamburg, as well as at Liverpool, Hull, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Belfast, Dublin, Cork, Galway, or any other port which trades with Boston, Portland, Quebec, or Montreal, will be conveyed to any point in Canada to which a railway runs, or to any place in the United States where a leading railway has a station, without the trouble of making even an inquiry, or the delay of a single unnecessary moment. Each passenger will be supplied with a ticket—authenticated by the

signature of a duly authorised chief-officer of the Grand Trunk Company—a map of his route, and even a timetable, which, while he will be secured against all imposition, vexations, and delays after he lands, will tell him almost the very hour at which he will arrive at his destination.

There can be no doubt that this extensive project is one of the greatest utility, and that, if properly carried out, it will have important effects upon the emigration from Europe to America. The Toronto paper, however, looks specially to the Canadian share of the benefit, and not, we think, without cause. 'We need hardly point out the advantage to Canada of the best class of emigrants being conveyed upon its railways, and in view of its splendid soil and settlements. Even supposing that a large number will have made up their minds to go to the far west, many—and these the most wealthy and valuable—will determine to settle where comfort and civilisation mark the people, and the soil and climate unexceptional. It need hardly be said that the whole face of Upper Canada is one wide advertisement of such characteristics. The farmhouses, the fences, the stock, the villages, the churches and school-houses, the horses and carriages, and the dresses and well-to-do appearance of the Canadian agriculturists, speak at every turn, in favour of their country to every man who desires a comfortable residence for himself and a future home for his children. So that, apart from the emigrants who may come with the direct intention of settling in Canada, we are sure to get many who, not understanding America, or probably with mistaken notions of the British provinces, may have determined to settle elsewhere. The through-ticket system will, in short, allow Canada to advertise herself; and she wanted no better advertisements at the London and Paris Exhibitions, and will require none better to the intending settlers of North America.'

Sir Cusack Roney, the secretary of the Grand Trunk Company, is co-operating with Mr Bidder in the European part of the arrangements; and when all is ready, in addition to his present duties, he will retain the superintendence of the through-booking system. If judiciously carried out, as we doubt not it will be, the best results will follow for all parties. The benefit will not be confined to Canada. By the system of railways now in full operation, emigrants can be carried direct from Quebec, or from Portland in Maine, to the banks of the St Clair in the extreme west of Canada, and thence pursue railway routes through Michigan to Wisconsin, and other attractive places of settlement in the north-western regions of the United States. In short, in a day or two after landing on American soil, and with no kind of trouble, the emigrant will find himself at his new home. Such a prodigious convenience, robs emigration of its terrors, and must set hundreds of timid families wandering. As the notices of this through-ticket system will probably excite inquiry, we recommend that the authorised places for procuring tickets should be made well known by advertisements.

#### THE FUGITIVE SLAVES.

Our wrongs were countless as the sands  
Of that dread soil whereon we stood:  
With thongs they bound our plighted hands,  
They scourged us—even to blood;  
They smote our first-born midst his play,  
They seized and sold him far away.

I looked upon his mother's face;  
'Twas blank as is a starless night  
When the round moon has left her place,  
And there is no more light;  
And cold upon her blighted cheek  
Lay the strong grief she might not speak.

I said: 'In yonder dreary swamp  
Afar shall we two hide our wo?'  
Then first her eye with tears grew damp,  
She said: 'My love, we'll go;  
For thy lost sake, my child, my child,  
We'll go and madden in the wild!'  
We had no home from which to part,  
As through the blooming rice we stole;  
Our home was in each other's heart,  
And in the God-sent soul  
Which dared the wrath of man to brave,  
Though groaning in a tortured slave.  
The long night-shadows veiled our flight  
As, breathless, we pursued our way;  
But dreadful as the white man's sight,  
So dreadful was the day:  
If God's blest light our path revealed,  
Too well we knew our doom was sealed.  
And daylight broke: the hunt was up!  
We caught their shouts upon the gale;  
And we must drain the bitter cup  
If once our limbs should fail:  
Delirium in our every tread,  
For life—for death, on—on we sped.  
The swamp was gained; and, crouching low,  
We dared to breathe the poisoned air.  
Behind us, stretched a waste of wo;  
Before, the wild beast's lair;  
Yet paused we now, or shrank we back,  
The Cuban dogs were on our track!  
Beyond, upon the thicket's verge,  
A lake of stagnant waters lay:  
We plunge; our fainting limbs we urge;  
We cleave the watery way.  
Less than the white man did we dread  
The alligator's sly bed.  
A strange relief our bosoms crossed:  
The terrors of pursuit were past;  
In the dank ooze the trail was lost,  
And we were safe at last—  
Safe!—midst the horrors of the brake,  
The mockson and the rattlesnake!  
I had no fears; the bitter flood  
Of wo had drowned each life-born care;  
And one beside me breathed, who stood  
Between me and despair;  
Though that keen anguish which she bore,  
Had passed not, shall pass never more.  
It seems to bear a spell which holds  
The fiercer monsters from their prey:  
The serpent with his coiling folds  
Will shrink and glide away;  
Her eye each deadlier reptile charms,  
And I lie safe within her arms.  
And we are free!—free! God in heaven  
Who caused that word to sound so sweet,  
Save those to desperation driven  
Beneath the white man's feet;  
Who makes, to mar Thy glorious plan,  
An outcast of his brother-man!

E. L. H.

#### 'A TILT AT MR GOSSE.'

Mr P. H. Gosse does us the honour to write in reference to an article in our number for October 11, 1856, in which some particulars of an anecdote of the killing of a crocodile, given in his *Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica*, are called in question. We do not think it necessary to print Mr Gosse's letter or the documents he transmits to us, but content ourselves with remarking, that he has adduced what seems fair evidence of the correctness of the principal facts reported in his narrative.

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